



Indiana State Department of Agriculture  
Governor Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.  
Lt. Governor Rebecca S. Skillman, Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development  
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## ***Drought Serves as Reminder for Fire Safety & Prevention***

INDIANAPOLIS (July 27, 2012) - The Indiana State Department of Agriculture, associated agencies and industry partners want to remind farmers and all citizens of the risks and dangers of hay bale fires and other agricultural-related fires resulting from severely dry conditions.

Forestry and fire officials have responded to a number of hay bale fires across the state during this drought period. Whether started by a wildland or structure fire, lightning, electrical source, spontaneous combustion or other means, hay bale fires are difficult to suppress and can be detrimental to farming operations. Here are a few recommendations to help reduce the risk to people and property alike:

- Break hay stacks into smaller lots and spread them into more spaces around or away from farms, allowing heat and moisture to escape
- Leave hay stacked in fencerows and haul at a later date to avoid excessive heat build-up in barns and other storage facilities
- Keep bales/stacks away from wire fences or trees (which may attract lightning)
- Keep bales/stacks away from roads where cigarettes are often discarded
- Cover bales with tarps (which will also help protect hay from weather-related losses like mold, rot and shrink)

Other agricultural actions can also fuel fires, especially with dry crops standing in the field. Heightened awareness is appropriate when farmers engage in activities involving those crops and when operating equipment at harvest time. Farmers are encouraged to:

- Conduct routine maintenance of all machinery, with special attention to bearings, chains and other moving parts that create heat and can lead to fire
- Have fire extinguishers fully charged and on hand
- Keep farm tanks filled with water in order to respond quickly in the case of an emergency
- Review emergency procedures with family members, employees and other appropriate personnel.

Indiana recently launched a comprehensive website dedicated to the latest developments on our state's efforts in response to the 2012 Drought. Visit [www.in.gov/drought/](http://www.in.gov/drought/) for more information on disaster declarations, assistance programs and additional resources for producers.

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